

OPTICAL NAVIGATION SYSTEM FOR
ROTARY CONTROL BASED NON-CONTACT CONTROLLER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

The invention pertains to a rotary non-contact controller. In particular, the invention pertains to an optical navigation system with at least two degrees of freedom.

Description of the Prior Art

In the prior art, there are many kinds of rotary controller devices. However, it has been difficult to design practical controllers with sufficient size and resolution for certain applications. In addition, it has been difficult to design a rotary controller with at least two degrees of freedom, one rotational, and the other with an axis perpendicular to the axis of rotation. For example, a large rotary control wheel on jog CD players for disc jockey applications generally does not have sufficient resolution and only a single degree of freedom.

In addition, contact controller have had substantial maintenance concerns as "contact" of the moving parts inherently causes wear and tear.

OBJECTS AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a controller with at least two degrees of freedom, for the control of at least two independent variables.

It is therefore a further object of the present invention to provide a controller which maintains simple and intuitive use for the user.

It is therefore a still further object of the present invention to provide a high resolution, high speed, multi-axis controller.

It is therefore a still further object of the present invention to provide a controller which, in many respects, can be considered a non-contact controller.

These and other objects are attained by the present invention wherein an optical navigation system is provided with a non-contact controller and a rotating control wheel or platter. At least a portion of the control wheel includes a flat material with a random pattern design on the surface for providing a reference for the optical sensor. Of the degrees of freedom of movement of the controller, one is provided by the rotation of the control wheel and at least one other is provided by the orthogonal movement of the control wheel. The non-contact controller can be velocity sensitive, motion sensitive, and/or position sensitive in each axis. The resulting output can be via virtually any standard computer connection, particularly connections to a standard personal computer (PC) or similar device. Typical connections include USB, firewire, serial or wireless connection. The use of the optical navigation system thereby creates a high resolution, high speed, multi-axis controller.

A typical application of the controller is for audio or disk jockey type applications.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Further objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the following description and from the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view, including an exploded view of the optical navigation system, of the underside of the controller of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a perspective view, including a perspective view of the optical navigation system, of the underside of the controller of the present invention.

Figure 3 is a close-up perspective view of the controller of the present invention.

Figure 4 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment of the present invention wherein the optical navigation system is placed about the periphery of the rotatable platter.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now to the drawings in detail wherein like numerals indicate like elements throughout the several views, one sees that controller 10 is shown in perspective in Figures 1 and 2. Shaft 12 is journaled for rotation in concert with circular platter 14. The underside of circular platter 14 is shown in Figures 1 and 2, so that the view is from below. The interior portion of circular platter 14, proximate to shaft 12, includes portion 16 upon which a random pattern is printed. Additionally, shaft 12 can be pivoted laterally which provides for at least one, and as many as two additional degrees of freedom. Typically, shaft 12 can be pivoted forward and away (sometimes referred to as “up and down”), and may even be additionally pivoted to allow side-to-side motion, which is an additional degree of freedom which can control another variable.

Optical navigation system 20 is secured to the base (not shown) and is positioned on the underside side of circular platter 14 about portion 16 to optically acquire sequential surface images (frames) and mathematically determine the direction and magnitude of movement. As shown in Figure 1, the optical navigation system 20 includes lens 22 (typically an HDNS-2100), circuit board 24 (which is typically secured to the base 'not shown'), LED 26 (typically an HLMP-ED80-XXXXX), sensor 28 and clip 30. A typical sensor 28 would be the Agilent ADNS-2051 Optical Mouse Sensor, the Data Sheet of which, dated October 24, 2001, is hereby incorporated by reference, both for the sensor 28 and for other components of optical navigation system 20. Those skilled in the art will recognize a range of equivalents after review of the present disclosure. After the calculations are performed, the result is communicated to a computer (not shown) or similar digital device via output 32. The output can be based on position, velocity or motion in any of the axes of motion.

Figure 3 shows optical navigation system 20 in closer detail.

Figure 4 shows an alternative embodiment wherein the rotatable platter 14 includes a circumferential skirt 40 with a printed random pattern, similar to the pattern on portion 16 of rotatable platter 14 shown in Figures 1 and 2. Optical navigation system 20 is positioned to optically acquire sequential surface images from circumferential skirt 40 and mathematically determine the direction and magnitude of movement.

To use this controller 10, the user rotates rotatable platter 14 and further rocks or tilts rotatable platter in any of the additional one or two degrees of freedom. The position, velocity or motion of rotatable platter 14 is detected by optical navigation system 20 and the resulting signal is transmitted to a computer (not shown) or similar digital device via output 32.

Thus the several aforementioned objects and advantages are most effectively attained. Although a preferred embodiment of the invention has been disclosed and described in detail herein, it should be understood that this invention is in no sense limited thereby and its scope is to be determined by that of the appended claims.